



MEMORANDUM

Date : 29 March 2007
To : All Manning Agencies
From : Nonimmigrant Visa Unit – Seafarer Team
Subject : **Visa Validity, Speed-Line, and Employment Contracts**

Greetings!

We have incorporated suggestions from our clients and made some changes that we hope will facilitate the visa process for all parties concerned.

Visa Validity: All C-1/D transit and crew visas, all offshore B-1/OCS visas, and all B-1 yacht visas will be issued as **60 month, multiple-entry visas**. We are no longer issuing limited validity visas. This will save seafarers, manning agencies, and the U.S. Consulate time and resources.

Speed Line: Seafarers who have been previously issued a U.S. visa will be given the privilege of going through the "Speed Line." Applicants in the "Speed Line" will enjoy a faster, shorter interview and a reduced waiting time. As long as the "Speed Line" applicant is finger scanned and has not misused his/her previous U.S. visa(s), he/she will be issued another U.S. visa.

Employment Contracts: We are now accepting POEA in-house processed employment contracts and stamps in the seaman's books. We believe that the most important part of the visa application process is not where the documents are processed, but whether they are processed accurately. The U.S. Embassy does not make a distinction between a POEA-issued contract and stamp and an in-house processed contract and stamp. All that is important is that the employment contract and stamp be accurate and match the information in the letter of guarantee and the information in the DS-156/DS-157 visa application form.

We hope that our new policies make the visa application process better.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Seafarer Team
Nonimmigrant Visa Unit
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U.S. Embassy Manila